

Crop Conditions as of August 16, 2007

Crop harvest in Alberta has begun much earlier than usual this year, due to early crop maturity. Provincially, harvest is about two weeks ahead of most years, with 7% of the 2007 crop in the bin. Harvest has occurred mostly in the Southern Region. Although the persistent hot, dry weather across the province in July has resulted in a significant deterioration of crop conditions and yield potentials, it has also hastened crop development. However, due to late seeding, the development of some crops is still 7-10 days behind normal. These crops are mostly in the Peace Region, North West Region, and western parts of the Central Region.

By crop type, estimates of provincial harvest progress are: dry peas 29%, durum 14%, barley 9%, spring wheat 6%, oats 2% and canola 1% (see Table 1). In addition, the estimated percentages of crops swathed are: canola 22%, durum 12%, barley 10%, spring wheat 9%, dry peas 6% and oats 4%. About one-half of winter cereals has been combined. Hailstorms have caused crop damage in many areas, while frosts have been reported in some central parts of the Peace Region.

Overall, provincial yields this year are expected to be below 10-year averages for durum wheat and dry peas, but above 10-year averages for winter wheat and fall rye. For spring wheat, barley, oats and canola, yield potentials are estimated to be similar to their 10-year averages. In addition, yield prospects remain strong for specialty crops under irrigation, including sugar beets, potatoes and dry beans.

The recent rain showers coupled with more seasonal temperatures have offered some reprieve for crops and pasture. Precipitation varied considerably across the province, with the least amount reported in the Southern Region. Despite the moisture received, dry conditions remain largely unchanged and rain is still needed in many areas of the province. Overall, surface soil moisture is rated as 29% poor, 32% fair, 27% good, 10% excellent and 2% excessive, while sub-surface moisture is reported as 21% poor, 30% fair, 33% good, 14% excellent and 2% excessive.

The second cut haying operation is estimated to be 32% complete on dryland, and over 80% complete under irrigation. Overall, more than 70% of the hay is rated as good to excellent. Pasture conditions in the province are rated as 26% poor, 37% fair, 33% good and 4% excellent. Tame hay growth is reported as 25% poor, 33% fair, 33% good and 9% excellent.

Grasshoppers and gophers have caused crop damage in some areas. Other pest problems reported include diamondback moths, lygus bugs, army cutworms, sawfly and root maggots. Also reported are some late season crop diseases such as sclerotinia in canola.

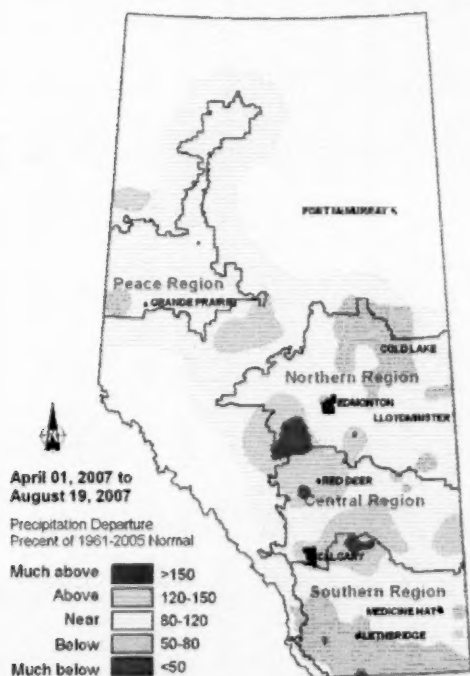


Table 1: Estimates of Crop Harvest Progress by Region

	South	Central	N. East	N. West	Peace	Alberta
Spring Wheat	16.1%	3.3%	0.7%	0.1%	0.0%	5.6%
Durum Wheat	15.1%	3.9%	0.7%	0.1%	0.0%	14.0%
Oats	16.8%	1.6%	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	2.1%
Barley	25.9%	2.9%	0.2%	0.1%	0.0%	8.7%
Canola	14.7%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.3%
Dry Peas	62.5%	11.5%	37.3%	15.4%	0.0%	29.2%
All Crops	20.5%	2.9%	2.2%	0.5%	0.0%	6.8%

Source: Alberta Agriculture and Food, Statistics and Data Development Unit

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REGIONAL ASSESSMENTS:

The 2007 Alberta Crop Report Series continues to provide summaries for the following five regions:

Region One: Southern (Strathmore, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, Foremost)

- The crop harvest is well underway and currently stands at 21% complete in the region. Yields for major grains and oilseeds are estimated to be below 10-year averages, reflecting the impact of hot, dry conditions in July and early August. Some late-seeded crops are being cut for swath grazing or baled for forages. Light bushel weights are reported for spring cereals. However, yield prospects for specialty crops under irrigation are quite promising.
- Some producers are spraying for lygus bugs in canola fields. Also reported are some wheat damage from sawfly and crop losses due to hailstorms.
- The second cut haying operation under irrigation is nearly 90% complete, with about 70% of the hay rated as good to excellent. Pasture conditions are reported as 26% poor, 46% fair, 27% good, and 1% excellent.
- The region remains dry, due to the lack of precipitation.

Region Two: Central (Rimbey, Airdrie, Coronation, Oyen)

- Combining is estimated to be nearly 3% complete in the region, and mostly has been for dry peas and winter cereals. Overall, yield prospects are estimated to be similar to the 10-year averages for spring cereals, but above the 10-year average for canola. Also, some areas have reported crop damage due to hailstorms.
- The second cut haying operation is estimated at about 17% complete on dryland, and 50% complete under irrigation. Pasture conditions are rated as 21% poor, 29% fair, 41% good, and 9% excellent.
- The recent rain showers have brought various amounts of precipitation to most areas of the region. Overall, surface soil moisture is rated as 24% poor, 31% fair, 21% good, 17% excellent and 7% excessive, while sub-surface moisture is 31% poor, 17% fair, 23% good, 22% excellent and 7% excessive.

Region Three: North East (Smoky Lake, Vermilion, Camrose, Provost)

- Overall, about 2% of the 2007 crop has been harvested in the region, mostly to dry peas. It is estimated that 37% of dry peas has been combined and about 40% of canola has been swathed. Yield potentials range from near average for spring cereals to above average for canola. Some hail-damaged crops are being cut for greenfeed. Also reported are some crop damage from grasshoppers and gophers.
- Pasture conditions are rated as 45% poor, 46% fair, and 9% good. There are some reports of second cut haying being done, with yields below average.
- The recent rain showers have brought various amounts of precipitation to many areas of the region. Despite this, dry conditions persist and rain is still needed.

Region Four: North West (Barrhead, Edmonton, Leduc, Drayton Valley, Athabasca)

- An estimated 15% of dry peas has been combined and 10% of canola is in the swath. The harvest of other crops is minimal. Overall, yield estimates are near average for spring wheat, but above average for oats, barley and canola. There are reports of crop damage from hailstorms, grasshoppers and other pests.
- The second cut haying operation is 27% complete, with most hay being rated as fair to good. Pasture conditions are reported as 25% poor, 34% fair, 38% good, and 3% excellent.
- Overall, surface moisture is rated as 21% poor, 35% fair, 40% good, and 4% excellent. Sub-surface moisture is reported as 14% poor, 35% fair, 48% good, and 3% excellent.

Region Five: Peace River (Fairview, Falher, Grande Prairie, Valleyview)

- Producers in the region have just started swathing dry peas and canola. Overall, yield prospects range from below average to average for spring cereals, and average to above average for canola. Grasshoppers and hailstorms have caused some crop damage. Also reported are frosts in some central parts of the region.
- The second cut haying operation is estimated at nearly 50% complete. Hay quality is mostly rated as good to excellent. Pasture conditions are reported as 12% poor, 34% fair, 46% good, and 8% excellent.
- Overall, surface moisture is rated as 3% poor, 23% fair, 41% good, 28% excellent, and 5% excessive. Sub-surface moisture is reported as 13% fair, 41% good, and 46% excellent.

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